

## **Bear Trunk Primary Lessons**

### ***Bear Lesson Plans for Primary Students***

#### ***Background information about Bears***

##### **Bear 101 #1: What is a Bear?**

Bears are animals that belong to the mammal family. They are warm-blooded, have fur, and have live young. Mother bears provide milk and care for their young. Baby bears are born in winter while the mother bear is hibernating. In the spring, the baby bears and their mother leave their winter den and begin exploring and looking for food. Some baby bears stay with their mother for two years.

Bears typically live alone rather than in groups. A male bear is called a boar. Boars are larger than the female bears. A female bear is called a sow, and bear babies are called cubs. Male bears usually do not help care for the cubs.

##### **Bear 101 #2: Kinds of Bears**

There are many kinds of bears. The North American bear types are the following:

- Polar bear
- Grizzly bear/brown bear
- Black bear (A note of interest: Asian black bear have a white “v” shape on their chests).

Grizzly bear have a hump on his/her shoulder. Their nose curves upward on the end. The grizzly’s face is described as “dish-shaped”. Grizzly have small round ears. Their claws are long and quite straight; their clawmarks go straight across their pawprint. The back end of the grizzly slopes toward the ground.

*Glacier National Park has grizzly bear and black bear.*

##### **Bear 101 #3: How do Bears Look?**

Bears are included in the same family as dogs, wolves, and foxes because they are sometimes carnivores. A bear’s bones or skeleton resemble a dog’s skeleton except that a bear’s bones are heavier to support the greater weight of the bear.

Most bears are large, powerful animals with thick, shaggy fur. Some bears are quite large. Some bears are small. (This is a great place to show students the grizzly bearskin and the black bearskin for comparison.) Bears and people eat some of the same foods: nuts, huckleberries, and plants.

*The bears in Glacier National Park change their diet as fruits and nuts come in season.*

##### **Bear 101 #4: Bear Features**

Analyze body parts and make analogies between bears and people. Discuss body parts. Tell how they are alike and different. Bears have good hearing and a keen sense of smell. Their eyesight is not very sharp. Bears have small eyes compared to the size of their bodies (so do people). Bears have short but very strong legs and can run very fast for short distances

**Bear 101 #5: What do Bears Eat?**

Bears eat meat if they can catch an animal without too much trouble. However, a bear's diet usually consists of plants, such as roots, leaves, and berries. Bears have sharp front teeth for catching and killing prey and flat chewing teeth for eating plants. Many bears catch and eat fish.

Bears love honey and eat it whenever they can find it. When they find a honeycomb, they rip it open with their sharp claws and eat the honey, the honeycomb, and the bees.

**Bear 101 #6: Bears in Winter**

Bears usually sleep in a den during the winter months. The dens differ depending on the environment and type of bear. Some bears sleep for six months without eating or drinking. This period of dormancy, or sleeping, is called hibernation. Many cubs, or baby bears, are born during this time. Many times a mother bear has twins, or two cubs born at the same time. Some baby bears are born weighing less than one pound. Mother bears provide milk for their cubs and her body keeps them warm during the cold winter. When they leave the den in the spring, the cubs are strong and playful.

*Bears in Glacier usually go into their dens after the first snow fall. In the spring, the male emerges first and two weeks or so later, the sows and cubs come out.*

**Bear 101 #7: Bears are Wild**

Read some of the resource books about bears in the trunk.

- Discuss how bears and people are alike (eat similar foods, move around, etc.) and how they are different (domestic and wild).
- Discuss how bears are not tame animals and prefer to be left alone. Most bears will run away from people. Mother bears are protective of their cubs and will defend them if they sense the cubs are in danger.
- Discuss the difference between pets and wild animals. Bears may be “tamed”, but they are still “wild “ animals.
- Discuss how to be safe when in bear country: making noise when on walks, giving bear “room” to walk away, backing up if one sees a bear in the path, remaining calm and quiet, storing food and waste properly.

**Bear 101 #8: Protecting Bears**

- Discuss how changing and challenged habitats are a constant threat to the survival of bears. Overpopulation, less food or space, and people entering their habitats are constant threats to bear populations. Laws protect many types of bears and their wilderness homes. However, the greatest threat to many bears is their wandering into campgrounds or areas populated by people. Visitors to parks are not to feed wild animals. This causes the bears and wild animals to think: people = food. The animals get lazy and do not want to hunt for food. The bears get upset when the food is gone and may hurt people or destroy their belongings while searching for food.
- Review bear safety (Bear 101 #7).

**Bear 101 #9: Keeping Bear Safe:**

Some bears are in no immediate danger of becoming extinct, or dying out completely. Park rangers, who are specially trained people, work at national parks. One of their jobs is to monitor the living conditions of bears.

*In Glacier National Park, there is an actual “bear” team of rangers who help the wildlife biologists. They have special training to work with bears. A “bear enforcement” team takes care of relocating bears that become problems for people.*

**Bear 101 #10: Bear in the Zoo**

Bears in the zoo are often caught as cubs because their mother bear has died. Some people try to keep bear cubs as pets, but the cubs become difficult to manage as they grow larger. (Read The Biggest Bear ). They are often donated to a zoo when they become adults.

***Bear Poems:***

**Bears**

There are many kinds of bears  
That live in forests everywhere.  
Bears run and climb and swim.  
We can move just like them!

**Wild Beasts by Evalene Stein**

I will be a lion  
And you shall be a bear,  
And each of us will have a den  
Beneath the starry sky;  
And you must growl and growl and growl,  
And I will roar and roar,  
And then—why , then—you'll growl again,  
And I will roar some more!

***Bear Songs:***

**The Bear Went Over the Mountain**

The bear went over the mountain,  
The bear went over the mountain,  
The bear went over the mountain,  
To see what he could see.

To see what he could see,  
To see what he could see.

The other side of the mountain,  
The other side of the mountain,  
The other side of the mountain,  
Was all that he could see!

***Jump Rope Chant/ Creative Movement***

Teddy bear, teddy bear turn around.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your toes.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your nose.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your hair.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, pretend you're scared.

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Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your side.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, pretend to hide.

Teddy bear, teddy bear, jump up high.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, say good-bye.

### **Bear Hunt “repeat after me” song (children repeat each line, and slap thighs when there is no pantomime/gesture)**

I’m hiking on a bear trail (Walk in place. . . repeat)  
I’m not afraid (Point to self and shake heads back and forth. . . repeat)  
Got real good friends (Extend hands outward to indicate “friends”. . . repeat)  
By my side (Extend right hand to side. . . repeat)  
Oh, oh! (repeat)  
What do I see? (Right hand in “straight” position above eye and look to the right and left . . . repeat)  
Oh look! It’s some tall grass! (Move arm and hand above head to indicate tall grass . . . repeat)  
Can’t go over it (Move hand to indicate going over. . . repeat)  
Can’t go under it (Move hand to indicate going under something. . . repeat)  
Can’t go around it (Move hand to the side to indicate going around something . . . repeat)  
Got to go through it (Move arms like you are pushing grass aside so you can walk through it. . . repeat)

I’m hiking on a bear trial (Walk in place. . . repeat)  
I’m not afraid (repeat)  
Got real good friends (Repeat motion from above. . . repeat)  
By my side. (repeat)  
Oh, oh! (repeat)  
What do I see? (repeat)  
Oh look! It’s a tall tree. (Move hands alongside and up over the head to indicate a tree. . . repeat)  
Can’t go over it (Repeat motion from 1<sup>st</sup> stanza.)  
Can’t go under it (Repeat motion from 1<sup>st</sup> stanza.)  
Can’t go through it (Repeat motion from 1<sup>st</sup> stanza)  
Got to climb up it (Pretend to climb a tree. . . repeat)

#### **Bear Trunk Primary Lesson 4c.**

I'm hiking on a bear trail.

I'm not afraid

Got real good friends

By my side

Oh, oh!

What do I see?

Oh look! It's a wide river. (Move both arms straight out from the sides to indicate "wide". . .repeat)

Can't go over it

Can't go under it

Can't go through it

Got to swim across it. (Pretend to swim . . . repeat)

I'm hiking on a bear trail.

I'm not afraid.

Got real good friends

By my side.

Oh, oh!

What do I see?

Oh look! A deep, dark cave. (Move one arm down to indicate "deep", squint for "dark". . .repeat.

Can't go over it

Can't go under it

Can't go through it

Got to go in it. (Pretend to enter the cave. . .repeat)

Oh, oh! It's dark in here.

I feel something. (Pretend to touch something. . .repeat)

It has lots of hair! (Pretend to feel hair on something. . .repeat)

It has sharp teeth! (Pretend to be touching an animal's teeth. . .repeat.)

It's a bear! (Children love to scream this part.)

Pantomime backing out of the cave, swimming across the river, climbing up and down the tree, moving through the tall grass, until you open and close the door of your house, and lock the door.

I'm not afraid!

***Creative Movement- Bear Walk***

Invite children to pretend to be big bears.

- Walking on all fours
- Standing up to sniff the air
- Digging up roots, turning over a log, digging up ground squirrels
- Eating berries (whole)
- Running on all fours
- Standing on hind legs and roaring
- Catching fish
- Sleeping in the den
- Swimming
- Eating honey

***Art***

**Bear Shapes**

Print the salt flour dough recipe on chart paper. Have children help measure ingredients and make dough.

***Salt Flour Dough***

2 c. flour

1 c. salt

1 c. water

1 tsp. cooking oil

Mix, knead, and shape into balls. Use the dough to make bear shapes.

**Collage**

Have children make a collage of bear pictures cut out from magazines.

**Rubber stamps/ Stencils**

Have children use rubber stamps of bears and stamp pads, or trace bear stencils to create collages of bears.

***Math***

**Sort and Pattern.** Have children sort teddy bear counters by (1) color, (2) shape, and (3) size. Ask children to count how many are in each set. Which sets have more, less, or the same(equal) amounts? Help children match numerals and number words to each set. Have children create patterns with teddy bear counters, such as

AB, AB

ABC, ABC

ABCD, ABCD

ABAC, ABAC

ABACAD, ABACAD

ABBA, ABBA

AABB, AABB

**Sort, Count, Graph.** Bears eat nuts. Have children sort, classify, and count various kinds of nuts. Conduct a taste test. Use a bar graph to illustrate which nut was each student's favorite. Which nut was the favorite? The least liked? (Precaution: make sure students do not have an allergy to peanuts, etc.)

**Estimate How Many.** Fill a jar with teddy bear counters. Let children examine the jar and guess how many items are in the jar. Write the number representing each child's guess. Then count the shapes and compare the guesses.

Put the same number (and size) of bears into three different shape of containers. One should be low with a large area, another container should be taller and thinner, and the third container should be yet a different shape. Have children guess which container contains more bears. Discuss the surprise ending! They all contain the same number!

***Social Studies***

Have children bring their favorite teddy bear to school. Have parents write about some of the places that teddy bear has been. Have parents indicate on a map where the teddy bear has been.



***Science, Health, Safety***

**Physics. Moving Heavy Objects.** Bears often drag or roll heavy objects while hunting for food. People also drag, push, and pull objects. Demonstrate how large, heavy objects are moved by rolling them and using wheels to make the work easier.

Activity 1:

1. *Have two children each carry a heavy stack of books.*
2. *Then put one stack on a small blanket and the other stack in a small wagon.*
3. *Have two children drag the blanket and pull the wagon from one place to another.*
4. *Discuss which way is easier.*

Activity 2: Move a heavy object by having students place rhythm sticks in front of the object being rolled. Compare this to dragging the same object. Discuss.

**Simple Machines**

Early man created simple machines to make his work easier. Read books to discover how simple levers are used to lift heavy things and how objects, such as rhythm sticks, may be used to roll and move them. Use a lever to lift a heavy object onto sticks, and then roll the object along by placing more sticks in front of the rolling object. Tell children that in the past, before heavy machinery was invented, people moved heavy objects using this technique. Explain that this technique is still used today. Conveyor belts at grocery stores move food items toward the cashier using rollers, or small wheels, underneath the rubber mat.

**Bears Move**

Have children pretend to be bears moving from one place to another in search of food. Discuss how bears move around, yet stay within the boundaries of where they live. Bear tracks help us know where bears travel, how far they travel, and how many bears are in one place. Examine the bear track mold from the bear trunk. You may want to create and cut out bear tracks and place them on the floor.

**Swimming**

Demonstrate how bears swim in water and how people swim. Both paddle in the water, but bears do not kick their feet like people do when they swim. Both come up for air while swimming in the water.

***Reading and Writing Readiness***

**Goldilocks and the Three Bears**

Read and then create a Story Web for each of the following:

- Setting
- Names of characters
- What happened (plot or problem)
- Story ending (problem solution)

Why do you think this story was written?

Have a child or children retell the story.

**Bear Foods**

Read books about vegetables and foods that people eat. Books by Lois Ehlert and Ruth Heller are helpful for this lesson. Discuss how people eat many of the foods that bears eat, particularly some nuts and berries. Purchase strawberries, blueberries, and different kinds of nuts to share with children. Create a bar graph to show children's favorite foods. (Precaution: Check for food allergies.)

**Honey**

Read The Bearenstein Bears Go On a Honey Hunt, or some other book(s) about honey. Read the label on a jar of honey to determine its ingredients and nutritional value. Have children eat honey which has been spread on biscuits. Have children describe how honey tastes, feels, looks, and smells. (Precaution: Check for food allergies of students).

**Acrostic Poems**

Create a poem as a large group activity. If students are able, have each child create a poem on his/her own.

**B** Big, brown, black bear  
**E** Eats fish  
**A** Always hunting for food  
**R** Runs fast  
**S** Sleeps in the winter

**G**  
**R**  
**I**  
**Z**  
**Z**  
**L**  
**I**  
**E**  
**S**

